

Slander myself as false to *Edward's* bed,
 Throw over her the veil of infamy:
 So she may live unscarr'd from bleeding slaughter,
 I will confess she was not *Edward's* daughter.

K. Rich. Wrong not her birth, she is of royal blood!

Queen. To save her life I'll say she is not so.

K. Rich. Her life is safest only in her birth.

Queen. And only in that safety dy'd her brothers.

K. Rich. No, at their births good stars were opposite.

Queen. No, to their lives bad friends were contrary.

K. Rich. All unavoided is the doom of destiny.

Queen. True; when avoided grace makes destiny:
 My babes were destin'd to a fairer death,
 If grace had bless'd thee with a fairer life.

K. Rich. You speak, as if that I had slain my cousins?

Queen. Whose hands soever lanc'd their tender hearts,
 Thy head, all indirectly, gave direction:
 No doubt, the murd'rous knife was dull and blunt,
 Till it was whetted on thy stone-hard heart,
 To revel in the entrails of my lambs.
 But that still use of grief makes wild grief tame,
 My tongue should to thy ears not name my boys,
 Till that my nails were anchor'd in thine eyes;
 And I, in such a desp'rate bay of death,
 Like a poor bark of sails and tackling reft,
 Rush all to pieces on thy rocky bosom.

K. Rich. Madam, so thrive I in my enterprize,
 And dangerous success of bloody wars,
 As I intend more good to you and yours,
 Than ever you or yours by me were harm'd!

Queen. What good is cover'd with the face of heav'n,
 To be discover'd, that can do me good?

K. Rich. Th' advancement of your children, gentle lady.

Queen. Up to some scaffold, there to lose their heads.

K. Rich. No, to the dignity and height of fortune,
 The high imperial type of this earth's glory.